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Giorgio Rota

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- 1 Here the Author offers her reflections on “the role of Shiism in Safavid Iran and its impact on the making of Iranian national identity”, more in the hope of stimulating discussion than with the ambition of giving definitive answers (pp. 307-308). Consequently, her “conclusions” are in fact hypotheses: that “Shiism as such did not play a significant role in the first Safavid period”, that is, that it did not alter a “traditional political behaviour” which was also common to Sunni rulers, and that the “exceptional importance of the clerics” and its “associated Iranization of Shiism” are due to a “loss of the imperial dimension” by the late Safavids and the Qajars (pp. 315, 317). The reader will be surprised by some statements, such as, for instance, that “the Portuguese were declared enemies of Iran” (p. 310), or that for the Safavids the “international arena” in which they operated “meant primarily interaction with the West” (p. 314). Given the subject of this article, the absence of any mention of Rula Jurdi Abisaab’s, *Converting Persia* (London, 2004) and Kathryn Babayan’s, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002) is also surprising.

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**Thèmes :** 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

## AUTEURS

**GIORGIO ROTA**

Institut für Iranistik - Wien